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THE THEOSOPHICAL FORUM.

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Each member can send questions, answers to questions, opinions, and notes upon Theosophical subjects. When necessary, the various communications will be condensed by the editor. Members will be careful to write on only one side of the paper and to use black ink.

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For paragraphs under the word "Ans." the editor is personally responsible.

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QUESTION LXV.

What is the mental or spiritual law that brings into the Theosophic ranks so many "cranks," i. e., so many poorly-balanced, badly-educated, self-sufficient, and really licentious people?

Ans.—Without very much better evidence than has ever reached the centers of Theosophical activity, one must strongly demur to the assertion that many "really licentious" people enter the T. S. There is everything in its teachings to repel them, and nothing in popularity or prestige to make membership useful in rehabilitating a scamp or a *roué*, as, it may be feared, is sometimes the case with Churches. The Theosophical Society would seem a peculiarly unpromising field for exploitation by the seducer or the libertine. And, in fact, it has never been conspicuous for lay scandals, while of clerical it cannot have any.

But that "cranks," poorly-balanced, badly-educated, and self-sufficient people have entered is unquestionable. This must, indeed, be the case with any Society which does not exact for membership a standard of mental equilibrium, of education, and of modesty. Still, there are some special reasons why the T. S. will never be without representatives of the above classes. One is that its doctrinal teachings are so unconventional. They

are quite unlike those of any Church, they differ widely from those of accepted Science, they have a strongly Oriental flavor, they are very strange and new to the Western world, and they have no other exponent than the Society. Hence to anyone who is himself unconventional in either thought or habit, and to that extent an outlaw from conventional circles, they have a sympathetic attraction. Another reason is that the astonishing disclosures Theosophy makes of worlds and forces and potencies beyond those familiar to us are very captivating. They are so, of course, and in an intelligent way, to the clearest-headed, but in a distorted, misty, ill-conceived way they are so likewise to others, and thus some men stumble into Theosophy and into the Society because they are fascinated with wonderful revelations, however little understood or formulated. Still another reason is that a first knowledge of magical powers and of what can be done by Adepts thrills through a man's being and impels him to any step likely to lead to them. A fourth is the idea that in some mysterious way one may become through membership the recipient of thoughts or facts or experiences not otherwise attainable. A fifth is that there are certain contents in Theosophy analogous to systems or notions already held, and the person rushes into it as furnishing a sphere or a vent or a partly-congenial home for them.

And then there is a sixth, an honorable reason. There are not a few men, and there are many women, in whom the spiritual nature is stronger than the intellectual. Their impulses are all upwards, they sense instinctively the richer spheres of being, and the dominant principle is aspiration. Theosophy opens a limitless world to them. Instantly they perceive and respond to its motive. They do not grasp its philosophy and they cannot define its teachings. In its intellectual department they are stumbling and confused, possibly absurd, certainly bungling; and so, when they attempt exposition, it becomes a travesty even if it is not a caricature. They join the Theosophical Society because they are true Theosophists and because it is their proper place, and right welcome are they there, but being "poorly-balanced" or "badly-educated," they exhibit those defects in the T. S. as inevitably as in their homes.

These are some of the reasons for the phenomenon stated in the Question. They may not constitute a "law," but they furnish an explanation. It would, however, be a grievous mistake to suppose that the "cranks" and the illiterate form any large part of the Society's membership. So far as one can judge from direct observation, together with an inspection of the professional and social status of the names on its rolls, one would surely not assert a low average of its members. If there are reasons why inferior people come in, there are stronger reasons why superior do. Theosophical literature is most certainly not common-place or weak. The topic now passing over a continent and daily reaching new hearts and new journals is not the product of eccentric fancies or feeble minds. The Society which includes the most extraordinary writer and the most extraordinary inventor of the age may be small, but it is not contemptible. And though the queer and the blundering and the factious may come in, it is most improbable that they will ever swamp the rational and the regulated and the well-disposed. They certainly have not yet.

QUESTION LXVI.

Is the seventh principle, the Atma, ever incarnated, or are our bodies simply projections of that principle and formed by it, as was the statue Galatæa by Pygmalion? From some Theosophical books I gather that the seven principles are all incarnated from the beginning, and that each principle is evolved in turn. From others it would seem that the higher principles are never incarnated.

W. Q. J.—The fiction of the formation of Galatæa by Pygmalion is such a faint and inadequate symbol or illustration that there is nothing to be gained by its use, as it will surely mislead. The evolution of the bodily form came about in the same way as that of all other forms; as said in the *Bhagavad-Gîtâ*, "All is due to the mystic power of self-ideation, the eternal thought in the eternal mind," and only in the sense that all forms are projections from the eternal can we say that "our bodies are projections of that principle" (Atma). The second sentence of the question shows that here is another case in

which the very materialistic view of the sevenfold constitution of man given in *Esoteric Buddhism* and used by so many thereafter has resulted in inducing the notion that there is a separation between the so-called "principles." This idea of seven distinct things, entities, or principles in man ought to be abandoned, and is due almost wholly to erroneous nomenclature, as was strongly urged in several papers published in the *Path*. There can only be *one* principle, and all the rest are but aspects of it, or *vehicles* for it to work and manifest through. Therefore but the one principle is involved in generation, when it takes to itself six sheaths or vehicles, or shows itself under six aspects. But as it is Theosophic doctrine that this *one* principle—call it Atma—is in essence the Supreme, then its involution in matter is but partial. In order to understand nature and to reach self-consciousness, it is necessary that the six vehicles be found to work through, and what is meant in some Theosophical books by the statement that each "principle evolves in turn" is that from the beginning of a Manvantara the six material vehicles have to be evolved one after the other in due order and in correspondence with the rest of nature, none lagging behind and none ahead. For instance, at that period in evolution when we might assume that but one vehicle had been fully evolved, then man (so-called) would not be man as we know him. So we see in the *Secret Doctrine* that man, strictly as such, is not spoken of until several races or vehicles had been first fully evolved in due order and proportion.

From these considerations the old Hindu idea that what we see of man is but the inner (or outer) hard core—the material body—and that he, in fact, in his whole nature reaches even to the moon, would seem to gain some support. And I should incline to the opinion that Atma is never incarnated, but overshadows and shines into the being called man whom it has chosen to connect itself with.

QUESTION LXVII.

Are Sanskrit terms necessary or more desirable in Theosophical works than are English?

Ans.—They are not more desirable, but they are necessary

if English contains none of equivalent meaning. As the East has profoundly studied spiritual and cognate topics which the West has entirely passed over, it is inevitable that the language used by such students should have a terminology unknown to the latter. When, then, explications of doctrine or fact are to be made in English, how is the attempt possible unless through either tedious circumlocution or an adoption of the Sanscrit words? For instance, what English words correspond to Kama Loka, Devachan, Akâsa, Mahâtma, Nirvâna, Karma?

But the adoption from a foreign tongue of words lacking in the English is not at all a peculiarity of Theosophical writers. Almost all scientific terms come from either Greek or Latin. "Theosophy" itself comes directly from Greek. Weak and thin as is French, it has nevertheless given us some pithy and valuable words, even phrases. Not a few Italian words have been brought over, notably in music. Spanish has done a little, as in *cañon* and *olla podrida*. Indeed, much of our most ordinary vocabulary is not Anglo Saxon. It is not surprising, then, that a specific and exceptional department of study, until lately unknown, should need to borrow largely from the quarter best endowed.

If Sanskrit was now a spoken language it would have to do as English has to it. Such words as *steam-engine*, *railroad*, *tramway*, and *telephone* would be appropriated. It is not a discredit to any language that it enriches itself from others, any more than it is to an individual that he welcomes ideas from without.

QUESTION LXVIII.

How can it be truly said that the healing of disease, the impartation of healthful forces, or any other good done to suffering humanity "tends to Black Magic?"

Ans.—This is one of the many cases where discrimination is sorely needed. In the last few years there has come to many minds assuredness of the fact that in the limitless treasury of Nature there exist forces far higher, stronger, sweeter than any in material things, that there are curative agencies incomparably better than any to be found in drugs, and that the meta-

physician is a more potent practitioner than the physician. They have reversed the old conception that Nature is jealous and fickle, an untrustworthy power against which we must be ever on guard, and now view her as the generous custodian of all possible gifts and benefits, between whom and Man there should be the most boundless trust and cordiality. Instead of holding with St. Paul that "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God," they hold that the more unreservedly one falls into His hands the better. They advocate repudiation of distrust and fear, the most unqualified confidence in the empire of good, the most unrestricted entry into the being of all the sunny, life-giving potencies around us. The more we do away with all self-created barriers between ourselves and the great universe of which we are a part, the more completely we end the disharmony and isolation of which mental and physical disorder are the consequences. In short, say they, "Drop your vestments of separation, leap fearlessly into the ethereal ocean of life, and life will buoy you, pervade you, preserve you."

It has been seen also, as might be expected, that the faculty of transmitting life-invigorating influences is just as inherent in humanity as that of transmitting the contrary. It would be strange if man could diffuse disease or evil, yet not health or good; strange if he was even less competent to the latter. And it would be very strange indeed if he could diffuse disease through thoughtlessness, and yet could not diffuse health through concentrated will-power. And if the dwelling upon low ideals induces a debased state of morals and imagination, and if continued thought upon sickness depresses the vital forces and promotes ill-health, so, it is said, will the opposite content of thought elevate alike the *physique* and the *morale*.

All this seems reasonable enough, and altogether harmonious with healthy views of Nature and of life. The next step is to apply it. Here again, it is said, sound reason guides. The best applicants of a system are they who have trained themselves in it, and if the most competent teacher of athletics is an athlete, and if the most skilful surgeon is he who most thoroughly understands surgery, so he can most efficiently aid in opening souls to light who has opened his own and knows the

process and the impediments. If he has intently studied concentration of will-power, as well as the habits which further constant abiding in nature's sunbeams, he is surely the one to help others to like benefits and to scientifically impart to them a healing influence.

Nor can there be any sound reason why such relief should be inhibited. If one M. D. may sinlessly use the restorative qualities in mineral or vegetable, why not another use those in atmosphere or sunbeam? If curative forces from the physical plane are legitimate, why not those from the metaphysical plane? If it is right to purge the body from bad humors which poison and sicken it, why can it be wrong to purge the mind from those tastes and images which prostrate it and then its encasement? If the lower powers in Nature are open to our use, is it supposable that the higher are barred off? And if fineness, purity, elevation, godlikeness are the injunctions of a practitioner, is he not allied to the White Magician? Surely "Yes" in each case.

But here is the distinction. Any method which awakens the higher instincts and guides them to self-determined activity along right lines is legitimate. But when, as is sometimes evidenced, a stronger will uses intangible forces to gain supremacy over the weaker, when the weaker, instead of being invigorated, is enfeebled further, when the patient is insensibly led to lean on the practitioner rather than to learn self-reliance and self-mastery, the essence of Black Magic is at work. There need not be the pronounced phenomena of hypnotism and "suggestion;" still less need there be mercenary or other improper motive. If the control is undue, the result unmanning, there is the *tendency* referred to in the Question.

Another problem is allied: Is there wrong in accepting remuneration for healing of the kind spoken of? The fact that the forces used are open to all men does not deprive of his claim to an honorarium him who has given time and thought to learning their nature and best use. If consecration to study of Materia Medica warrants a fee for the support of the student, why is the principle changed because the sphere of the curative agencies is shifted? As a man cannot maintain himself by handicraft and yet devote his life to investigation of medicine

and how most skilfully to apply it, his maintenance must come from his profession. Otherwise only the rich could act as physicians. Teachers of science and ethics depend upon their pupils; philosophers accept support in return for their instructions; surgeons are conceded a right to a fee from those they have relieved; why are philanthropic healers through intangible influences to be refused the needs of their daily life? Sentiment will not sustain an existence requiring food and clothes, and though cash may not be the motive for practice, it is the necessary condition to it. In this, as in all things, Theosophy is sound reason, and it recognizes facts in physical life as promptly as in the other life which it avowedly declares higher.

QUESTION LXIX.

How can I help a loved one to, as it were, help himself; one that cannot be made at all to understand Theosophy, yet so good as to be worth saving if possible?

Ans.—Apprehension of Theosophic fact and motive can never be secured to any one through persuasion, entreaty, or argument. Like a poet, a Theosophist "becomes, is not made." There are two components in his character as a Theosophist,—belief in certain truths, aspiration after development upon the lines which those truths declare; in other words, an intellectual conviction and a spiritual impulsion. Both are indispensable. If the former is lacking, a man may be a sentimentalist or an emotionalist, vaguely desirous of some higher state of being free from the belittlements of this and more congruous with the obvious possibilities of human nature; if the latter, he is a mere holder of facts without vitality, not using them nor putting them into circulation. But neither component can be introduced from outside; it must be formed from within. No real belief in any doctrine can be effected through influence or persuasion, for, so long as the doctrine is not perceived to be true, the inner nature opposes it, rejects it, will not receive and assimilate it. Now this absence of perception may be from lack of intelligence,—in which case all effort to proselyte is hopeless from the outset. Or it may be from

the fixedness of existing convictions, or from an unconscious repugnance to admitting oneself to have been wrong, or from mere stolid antipathy to change. Any avowed attempt to induce opposite opinions necessarily arouses all the conservative forces of the nature, and braces it for very firm and maintained resistance. Still less can the other component—spiritual aspiration—be originated by pressure, It may not exist at all in the character, in which case there is nothing to appeal to. Or it may exist in any measure possible, yet, if untheosophic beliefs have guided it in channels variant from Theosophic, it can never be deflected into the latter until the beliefs change. But these, as has been said, will not change through outside influence.

The "spiritual sense"—that of cognizing and appreciating supersensuous truth—is as truly a faculty as the "moral sense." There are natures to whom the distinction between verity and falsehood, right and wrong, honor and dishonor, is apparently meaningless. Certainly it has no influence in restraining or guiding the conduct. And so there are natures to whom all beings, places, conditions, states, experiences beyond those now known appear vagaries. Arguments which pre-suppose such, or considerations implying their value, appeal to a vacancy. To a nature thus defective, the yearning after a spiritual existence, the struggle to unite the human Atman to the Divine Atma, conveys no meaning, no stimulus. It is as much of a nullity as the aspiration in "The Chambered Nautilus" or the supersensuous uplifting in the music of "Lohengrin." How utterly vain to attempt to make a delicate essence perceptible to an organ which does not exist!

As has been explained in Theosophical writings, spiritual sensibility, like intellectual acuteness or moral vigor, is an affair of individual evolution through incarnations. A man senses the reality and value of the unseen eternal, just as he enjoys an able book or feels distinctions in right, not because a capricious Nature has endowed him with a gift which has been refused to his neighbor, but because he has in time past given heed to the spiritual faculty, cultivated it, obeyed it. What potency it now possesses is the measure of the devotion he has given to it. If inert, or inoperative, or feeble, the fact means that he has neg-

lected that side of his being. It does not mean that he is bad or worthless, certainly not that nothing is to be done to stimulate him, but only that you cannot induce in him an interest to which preliminary experience is needful but was not had.

What, then, is to be done? Precisely, one would say, what is done to a torpid limb or a sluggish intellect. Do not present activities in advance of it, or tease or worry it with pressure, or arouse repugnance by over-exertions. Give it the simplest and most elementary exercises, let stimulation be of the gentlest, use common sense and perpetual tact. The most efficacious of all influences is the spectacle of a life ruled by pervading principle, and that is quite within your power to exhibit. Healthiness is contagious, and if you are free from the ailments which affect mere worldly-minded men on the one hand, and from that other class which affect too many of the sincere and devout on the other, you will establish a center of sound magnetic influence. So that perhaps the first step towards helping the loved one is to begin with yourself. No doubt you have faults which Theosophy deplores and lack qualities which it enjoins, and if these are corrected and the nature made more rounded and salubrious, it will send forth the currents which can agitate the dormant faculties of another, awake them, and then aid them to actively function.

QUESTION LXX.

Is not the love that Christ taught, in its purity, i. e., chastity, the highest good?

Ans.—There is perhaps no topic upon which conventional ideas are more irrational, and consequently more unstable, than that of chastity. The restriction of the broad word "purity" to express the idea in "chastity" is one illustration, as also "moral" in the same sense. Are not truth, honor, nobility of character richer exhibits of purity and morals than a mere abstinence from one form of physical pleasure? To make that one form the pivotal fact of a whole moral system is to show strange want of proportion. To even treat a physical act as moral at all except as the moral element attaches through in-

jury to another, is itself a confusion of physics with morals. To insist that sexual relations are legitimate only under conditions of marriage is to say that an act, wrong if committed once, is quite right if there is a promise to commit it repeatedly,—a singular position for a moralist! One result of displacing a matter of correct living from its unshakeable place on the solid rock of respect to others' rights and putting it on the uncertain basis of an arbitrary dogma or a fanciful notion, is that multitudes refuse all distinction and deliberately claim unrestricted license. This is especially manifest in the lower middle class, but in no class can abstinence from injury to others be expected until the broad principle of duty is demonstrated and obvious facts and discriminations fearlessly maintained. When physiology is disentangled from morals, and morals receive a rational interpretation, the code will be very different, but also far more influential.

"Chastity" is abstinence from sexual relation. It may be due to either coldness of temperament or to principle, and, though a virtue, is not a virtue of the highest rank. There are others much more positive, more elevated, of finer quality, and more far-reaching. The word "purity" connotes not merely freedom from sensuality, but from dissembling, insincerity, untrustworthiness, dishonor, littleness of mind and motive, and, indeed, all moral qualities which deform or debase the man. Covering so much more ground, "pure" is a richer attribute than "chaste."

"Love" is at bottom one emotion, though differentiated into various hues as it touches the various relations of parent, child, brother, wife, friend, etc., just as intelligence is one force, whether applied to a syllogism, an epigram, a metaphor, or a drama. As a centrifugal and altruistic energy, taking the individual out of himself and concentrating him on an outside interest, it is of exceptional potency and merit; and it has this further enormous value, that if universal and unchecked, it would abolish all war, crime, and injustice, welding men into one Fraternity. But to say that Love, even as Christ taught it, is the "highest good" is to attribute to one fine quality what belongs really to the aggregation of all fine qualities. The "highest

good" is perfection, and perfection comes from the symmetrical development of the whole range of human faculties, not from the isolated development of any one of them. A man might be a sincere philanthrophist, and yet ignorant, undiciplined, and unwise. Hence he could not have the "highest good" if there was another man, equally philanthrophic, but instructed and sagacious. Nothing is "highest" if there is something higher.

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